



## New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection & Permanency	Effective Date:  6-30-2016
Volume:	VI	Adolescent Services	
Chapter:	A	Independent Living	
Subchapter:	1	General	
Issuance:	101	<b>Independent Living Placements and Arrangements</b>	

### Purpose:

This issuance establishes the policies and procedures regarding Independent Living Placements and Arrangements. Independent living placements and arrangements may be used only for youth ages 16 up to 21, when no family resource is appropriate or available, and neither adoption nor kinship legal guardianship is a suitable option.

### Policy:

#### A) When Independent Living Placements are Appropriate

When ALL viable alternatives have been exhausted, CP&P may then arrange to place such a youth in an independent living placement or arrangement. A youth in a licensed resource home or congregate care placement is not considered an independent living placement and therefore is not eligible for the independent living stipend.

See [CP&P-III-B-4-400](#), Independent Living as a Permanency Goal.

#### B) Determining the Appropriateness of the Independent Living Placement (16-17) or Arrangement (18-21)

Determine and document that independent living is the most suitable plan and appropriate for the youth as part of the assessment process. Eligibility is based on all of the following:

##### With Adolescent (those ages 16- 17)

- In order to determine the appropriateness of an independent living placement with an adolescent under the age of 18 a case conference must be conducted with the LOM, Casework Supervisor, Supervisor and Worker to discuss the placement and all parties must be in agreement in order to move forward,

- The adolescent is 16 years of age or older,
- The adolescent has no other appropriate supervised living arrangement available, and
- Background checks (CARI, CHRI and Local Police checks) must be completed on all individuals living in the home and the residence must be appropriate and physically safe.

#### **With Young Adults (those ages 18-21)**

- He or she meets one of the criteria for case acceptance and continued eligibility and has completed the Voluntary Services Agreement CP&P [Form 10-10](#),
- The young adult has no other appropriate supervised living arrangement available, and
- The residence in which the young adult will live must be appropriate and physically safe.

See [CP&P-III-A-1-500](#), Services to Adolescents Age 18 to 21.

### **C) Approval**

#### **With Adolescent (those ages 16-17)**

Local Office Manager's approval is required to place an adolescent in independent living. The assigned Worker submits CP&P Form [16-76](#), Special Approval Request, completed in the NJ SPIRIT application, containing the following information:

- Documentation that a case conference was held with LOM, Supervisor and Worker to discuss the placement and that all are in agreement,
- Documentation of attempts to secure an alternate supervised placement,
- An indication of the parent's willingness to consent to an independent living placement (or the need for a court order),
- A statement indicating why he or she requires independent living placement at this time,
- A statement indicating the adolescent's willingness to cooperate with the plan for independent living,
- A statement concerning the adolescent's need for Medicaid or other medical insurance,
- A statement of the adolescent's need for a clothing allowance, and
- A statement about the plans for the adolescent's future and of the expected length of time independent living placement will be necessary.

### **D) Six Month Approval**

#### **With Adolescent (those ages 16-17)**

Approval for an independent living placement is valid for no more than six months. At the end of each six month period, submit a written request to continue the independent living placement (use CP&P Form [16-76](#), Special Approval Request) for Local Office Manager approval.

The Worker completes an assessment during the six month service delivery to document the adolescent's well-being, service needs and adjustment to living independently, in accordance with case recording policy, [CP&P-III-C-6-100](#).

## **E) Medicaid**

CP&P must provide Medicaid coverage to youth in an independent living placement or if he or she is receiving the independent living stipend (Program Status Code 600, or 650 for otherwise ineligible youth, see [CP&P-V-A-4-100](#)). For some youth, it is possible Medicaid is available from another source, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or other federally matched program accessible via county welfare services, and these options must be explored and discussed with the youth on a case-by-case basis to determine the most appropriate program available see [CP&P-III-C-2-400](#), Supplemental Security Income, [CP&P-V-A-1-600](#), Services to Pregnant Women, or see [CP&P-V-A-3-500](#), Medicaid Extension for Young Adults (MEYA), also known as Chafee Medicaid, for more information about some of the other programs potentially available to adolescents and young adults.

The Medicaid and HMO cards remain in the possession of the youth. Also see Medicaid Eligibility Determination for CP&P Children, [CP&P-V-A-2-200](#), and Health Considerations for Adolescents, [CP&P-V-A-7-100](#).

## **F) MVR Schedule**

### **With Adolescent (those ages 16-17)**

The Worker must have face-to-face contact with the adolescent at least once a month. These contacts must occur at his or her residence.

During these contacts, the Worker determines, verifies, and documents:

- The continued appropriateness of the independent living placement,
- The continued safety of the adolescent, including the safety of the residence, and
- That the adolescent continues to live at the approved residence.

### **With Young Adults (those ages 18-21)**

The Worker must have face-to-face contact with the young adult at least once a month. These contacts may occur in a mutually agreed upon location; however, the Worker must visit the young adult at his or her residence at least once every three months.

For young adults in a post-secondary institution, please refer to the Minimum Visitation Requirements (MVR) Policy for more details (CP&P –III-C-3-100).

During these contacts, the Worker determines, verifies, and documents:

- The continued appropriateness of the independent living arrangement, and
- The continued safety of the young adult.

**Note:** Use assessment tools currently available for use by the Department of Children and Families staff and representatives; some may be available on-line. See:

- [CP&P-IV-A-2-100](#), Assessing Child Safety in Out-Of-Home Placement Settings (complete safety assessment when completing MVR); and
- [CP&P-VI-B-1-300](#), Adolescent Services Toward Self-Sufficiency.

## **G) Clothing**

Clothing allowance for youth in independent living situations is a fixed dollar amount per month, \$85 for regular size clothing or \$95 for oversized clothing. For those youth that are receiving independent living stipends (rent, food, and incidentals), the clothing amount will be directly deposited onto their Q Card or into their bank account in the same manner as the other stipends. For those not receiving other stipends, CP&P may issue a monthly clothing allowance from the LO Bank Account (LOBA). [CP&P-IX-F-1-300](#)

Checks for special clothing needs may be authorized in accordance with general agency policy. See [CP&P-IX-F-1-300](#). The local offices have luggage to transport the child's belongings; however, if luggage is not available, the LOBA Fund may be utilized for the purchase of the luggage. A child's possessions should never be transported in large plastic bags except in an emergency, when no immediate alternative container is available [CP&P-IX-F-1-300](#), Purchase Luggage for Transporting a Child's Clothing.

## **H) Child Placement Review Act**

CP&P must notify the Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part, of every youth, under the age of 19, in an independent living placement in accordance with the requirements of the Child Placement Review Act. See [CP&P-IV-A-3-200](#), Review of Children in Placement.

## **I) Termination from Independent Living Placement or Arrangement**

An adolescents/young adult's independent living placement may continue unless:

**With Adolescent (those ages 16-17)**

The adolescent's needs can be better met in a more appropriate placement.

### **With Young Adults (those ages 18-21)**

The young adult does not meet eligibility for CP&P services or continued CP&P services (see Services to Adolescents Age 18 to 21, [CP&P-III-A-1-500](#)). The Worker refers the adolescent to appropriate services.

### **Procedures:**

#### **1) Assess Safety**

The assigned Worker assesses the safety of a youth in independent living using CP&P Form [22-10](#), Congregate Care Questionnaire. The Worker:

- Observes the youth's interaction with other youth and adults in the facility/home,
- Interviews the youth's house parent or Counselor, and
- Observes the youth's room to assure appropriate sleeping arrangements, a bed.

Assess the youth's safety within one month of placement, at the independent living home/facility/arrangement, and every six months afterward. If the youth changes his or her living arrangements, again assess safety at that new site within one month of relocation.

Use LOBA Funds or Flex Funds, as appropriate, if needs are identified during the safety assessment process. See Local Office Bank Account (LOBA), [CP&P-IX-F-1-300](#) and the Flex Fund, [CP&P-IX-F-1-400](#).

#### **2) Safety Concern**

The Worker immediately contacts his or her Supervisor, or in his or her absence, the Casework Supervisor (by telephone from the facility or by cell phone), if there is a concern for the safety of the youth or other youths in the program/home. Proceed in accordance with [CP&P-IV-A-2-500](#).

#### **3) No Safety Concerns**

In the absence of safety concerns, the Worker and Supervisor meet within three work-days of the on-site visit to conference results of CP&P Form [22-10](#), and the Worker's impressions. Both sign the form in the designated spaces.

#### **4) OOL**

The Supervisor forwards copies of the completed CP&P Form [22-10](#) to OOL and CP&P Contract Administration staff for CP&P contracted supervised independent living programs.

### **Key Terms (Definitions):**

- **Youth** - for the purposes of Independent Living policy, "youth" means a person between the ages of 16 up to 21.
- **Adolescent** - for the purposes of Independent Living policy, "adolescent" means a person who is age 16 and 17.
- **Young Adult** - for the purposes of Independent Living Policy, "young adult" means a person who is between the ages of 18 up to 21.
- **Caring adult** - is an adult, identified by the adolescent/young adult, who is willing, and available to provide emotional support, encouragement, and assistance to the adolescent/young adult, to help him or her transition to self-sufficiency and adulthood. A "caring adult" may be a relative, family friend, neighbor, teacher, coach, clergy, or any other adult who is willing to assist the adolescent/young adult.
- **Rent** - is the cost of occupying a legal dwelling for a period of one month or longer, inclusive of rent and the cost of basic utilities.
- **Incidental Expenses** - are expenses for personal care and household items other than rent, food, clothing, or luggage.
- **Independent Living Placement** - is a specialized living arrangement for those adolescents, age 16 and 17 (up to their 18th birthday), who are able to function responsibly without continuous adult supervision, or with minimal supervision. An Independent Living placement may be provided in a private home, apartment, or other similar residence.
- **Independent Living Arrangement** - is a living arrangement for those young adults, ages 18 up to 21, who are able to function responsibly without continuous adult supervision, or with minimal supervision. An Independent Living arrangement may be provided in a private home, apartment, or other similar residence.

### **Forms and Attachments:**

- CP&P Form [16-76](#), Special Approval Request (NJS form)
- CP&P Form [10-8](#), Consent to Independent Living

- CP&P Form [5-43](#), Transitional Plan for YOUTh Success
- CP&P Form [22-10](#), Congregate Care Questionnaire

#### **Related Information:**

- [CP&P-IX-F-1-300](#), Local Office Bank Account (LOBA)
- [CP&P-IX-F-1-400](#), The Flex Fund
- [CP&P-IV-A-3-200](#), Review of Children in Placement
- [CP&P-III-B-5-500](#), Family Engagement
- [CP&P-III-A-1-500](#), Services to Adolescents Age 18 to 21
- [CP&P-VI-B-1-300](#), Adolescent Services Toward Self-Sufficiency
- [CP&P-V-A-3-500](#), Medicaid Extension for Young Adults, Also Known as Chafee Medicaid

#### **Website**

- NJ Youth Resource Spot, which lists resources for adolescents and young people: <http://www.njyrs.org>.